



YOUTH PILGRIMAGE TO ST. CLEMENT'S ISLAND



"I witnessed the youth sharing their faith, thanking our local heroes for giving back to the community, interacting positively with one another, and embracing history."

RITA WEAVER
ST. MARY'S COUNTY
BOARD OF EDUCATION



"It was a fun day! I met new friends, learned about the history of my faith and left feeling really proud to be Catholic."

CHEYANNE FRIESS
9TH GRADER



Testimonials

THE JOURNEY



SENATOR JACK BAILEY

"I have a strong background and understanding of the history of Catholicism in Southern Maryland. The work of SOMD ROOTS to offer this incredible opportunity to our youth is unmatched and I appreciate the many efforts of this organization to offer unique opportunities."

JOE ST. CLAIR

PRESIDENT, ST. CLEMENTS HUNDRED

"Since the Island is the site of the first Holy Catholic Mass said in the new world in 1634, it's the perfect location for the ROOTS Youth Group to offer a high school youth experience steeped in culture, history, religion and community! We support and welcome them to our Southern Maryland treasure!"



ERIC COLVIN ST MARY'S COUNTY COMMISSIONER

"To be able to walk in the footsteps of those who attended the first Mass in the new colonies, where the very concept of religious freedom was first expressed, will be a powerful encounter."

OUR MISSION: TO SHARE IN A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY TOGETHER TO HISTORIC ST. CLEMENT'S ISLAND, THE FOUNDATION OF CATHOLICISM IN THE BRITISH AMERICAN COLONIES, FOR MARYLAND AND DC HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH PROVIDING AN UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITY TO ENCOUNTER CHRIST WHILE BECOMING DEEPLY ROOTED IN FAITH, HERITAGE, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY!



Testimonial

SISTER MARIA THEOTOKOS ADAMS, SSVM, PHD
KEYNOTE SPEAKER, INAUGURAL EVENT OF "SOUTHERN
MARYLAND ROOTS: THE JOURNEY" 2022

On September 24, 2022, I joined Joe Melendrez and Fr. Larry Swink as a keynote speaker for the youth rally "The Journey: Why Did They Come?" organized by the Southern Maryland Roots youth group under the direction of Fr. Charles Luckett, Fr. Stephen Wyble, Fr. Ryan Pineda and Theresa Friess. This day of Catholic history and culture on St. Clement's Island far exceeded my expectations in several respects and I believe that it is an event that should be repeated so that more youth from Catholic high schools and parish youth groups can participate. I will mention two of the most important aspects.

First, this youth event was centered on the celebration of the Holy Mass at the very place where the first Catholic Mass was celebrated in the British colonies in 1634. Not only was the liturgy first and foremost, but the organizers had a very deep ecclesial vision in mind and a magnanimous spirit. They invited Cardinal Wilton Gregory himself to celebrate the Mass, and His Eminence most graciously accepted. The youth were very impressed to see their own archbishop make the journey from the city down to St. Clement's Island – by car, by boat, and nally by golf cart across the island to the site of the Mass.



Later in the afternoon there was also time of Eucharistic Adoration, prayer of the Rosary and opportunity for confessions.

Second, the event brought youth from different corners of Southern Maryland together for talks, prayer, sports and fellowship. In a time of fractured social relationships, the fact of so many teenagers being together from diverse backgrounds on an island spoke eloquently of our unity as Catholics. This event should be repeated and is worthy of being supported by the Archdiocese of Washington as a badge of honor.

Throughout the day we remembered the early refugee Catholics who came to this land seeking religious freedom, and the dangers they faced back in England. My own talk addressed the historical conditions of Fr. Andrew White, SJ and those on the Ark and the Dove, as well as his Jesuit confrere who took replaced him in England and later died there: St. Henry Morse, martyr (1595-1645).

I believe that as many local Catholic teenagers as possible should have the powerful experience of visiting the island where the first Maryland Mass was celebrated by those whose faith was the faith of martyrs. The legacy of immigrant Catholics from persecuted countries begins on St. Clement's Island and continues to our own day in the rich diversity of the Archdiocese of Washington. This event belongs to all Catholic teenagers as a unique opportunity to grow in their Catholic identity, their love for the faith, and their strength for the future. I am grateful to have been a part of this event, and I heartily endorse it being offered again.

Sr. Maria Theotokos Adams, SSVM PhD
March 1, 2023

Testimonials

THE JOURNEY



"The Youth Pilgrimage to St. Clement's Island was an uplifting experience for both young and old. The journey on the boat to the island helps to recall the journey that Fr. Andrew White and companions took almost 400 years ago. Stepping on the island and celebrating Mass with so many youth present helps remind us of how our faith was brought to this land under a time of persecution. With persecution still very much present in our country, this pilgrimage helps renew our faith and gives us the courage to be witnesses when we return home."

FATHER SAM PLUMMER



"I was standing on the site of the first landing and the establishment of Maryland! I was representing the oldest Sheriff's Office in the country, and I was surrounded by GOD fearing folks just like me. The prayer, the worship, the UNITY was overwhelming."

SGT. ANGELA M. DELOZIER
ST. MARY'S COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE



"The Journey was very well attended by our youth - the Future and the Backbone of our Catholic faith.

Wilton Cardinal Gregory, many clergy, community members and other dignitaries were in attendance. I was told that with the generous support of the Archdiocese of Washington, conviction and donations from our faithful community 'The Journey' could become a regular event. This event is an awesome way to evangelize the youth of our country!"

BILLY FITZGERALD
LOCAL BUSINESSMAN



Sponsorship and Donations

DO YOU HAVE PARISHIONERS THAT MAY WANT
TO DONATE, OR BUSINESSES IN YOUR PARISH
COMMUNITY THAT MAY WANT TO BE SPONSORS?

The following letter is our sponsorship letter. Feel free to
copy and give it to anyone you think might like to
contribute.

We can send you an electronic copy or multiple paper
copies to distribute.

Family Attendance

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE YOUTH FROM
YOUR PARISH ATTEND THIS EVENT?

The following is our letter to parents and students
notifying them of the event.

We can send you an electronic copy or multiple paper
copies to distribute.